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DEPT FOR AF/E RACHEL MEYERS, CTCC JAMES VAN DE VELDE,
AF/PDPA, IIP

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/06/2032

TAGS: [KPAO](#) [TZ](#)

SUBJECT: "CREDIBLE VOICE" REJECTING VIOLENCE IN TANZANIA

REF: STATE 122288

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission D. Purnell Delly for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (S) Per reftel, Post submits the name of Sheikh Musa Kundercha as a person of great credibility and influence in the Muslim community of Tanzania who offers an alternative view to Islamic extremism.

¶2. (SBU) Sheikh Musa Kundercha is a charismatic, populist leader working to improve the lives of ordinary Tanzanians. His ideology is built on the concept that people who have food, security, work, and basic resources will live peaceful lives, and not succumb to extremism. Kundercha has publicly stated that Tanzanian Muslims should reject the jihadist messages originating in the middle east and southeast Asia, and ensure that the violence plaguing those regions does not infiltrate Tanzania. He is strongly opposed to violence and extremism as forms of jihad, preaching that such violence creates chaos, worsens poverty, and leads to government oppression of Muslims.

¶3. (C) Kundercha has proven to be "thorn in the side" of the Government of Tanzania, frequently agitating for the GOT to do more to provide basic services such as water, roads, and healthcare. His promotion of themes of anti-corruption and good governance, as well as his calling on the government to curb wasteful spending, have angered some within the GOT. However, these themes form an integral part of his message of poverty alleviation. Post is not aware that Kundercha has any enemies other than politicians he may have irritated.

¶4. (SBU) In furtherance of his desire to alleviate poverty, Kundercha has established a primary school and two vocational centers providing training in tailoring, computers, machinery, and bookkeeping. Kundercha has traveled throughout Tanzania carrying his message, and has been warmly received across the country. His audience is comprised primarily of Muslims of humble means (which includes most Tanzanian Muslims), and he has the potential to have great influence within this group. Kundercha is an excellent public speaker, and his primary forums are mosques and religious gatherings. Post is not aware that he has traveled extensively or focused his message outside of Tanzania.

¶5. (SBU) Kundercha is a Sunni Muslim, and is the head of the Shura Council of Imams in Tanzania. He is 45 years old, has two wives and three young children, and resides in Dar es Salaam. Kundercha is a native Tanzanian of African ethnicity (tribal group unknown). He speaks Swahili and very good English, although he appears more comfortable using a translator when conversing with English speakers.

¶6. (S) Kundercha is reportedly critical of U.S. policy in Iraq, but he is not otherwise critical of the U.S. His

message is directed at a domestic audience, and he appears largely unconcerned with foreign affairs. However, during the 2006 Israel-Lebanon conflict, Kundercha was approached by the Iranian Embassy in Dar es Salaam to support a rally of his followers against Israel. He agreed, in exchange for Iranian financial support of his charitable programs. Post's perception is that while Kundercha does not trust the Iranians, he is highly practical.

17. (S) Post has not approached Kundercha regarding support for any joint endeavor. Post's Office of Regional Affairs has had limited contact with Kundercha. Kundercha may shy away from U.S. contact out of disinterest or a concern that such an association would damage his credibility. If he is contacted, he will likely seek support for his charitable endeavors. As such, an expression of interest in his programs appears an ideal means for approaching Kundercha.

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